



# Restoring Fire and Water to the Land

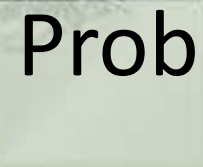


**Lois Conner Bonha**  
Tribal Water Summit  
Sacramento  
April 24 – 25, 2013




# Goals

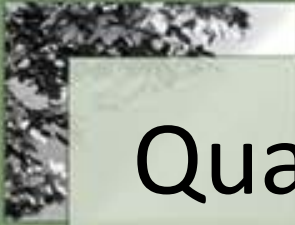
- To restore fire and water and the role they play in land conservation. To educate those who are the government-appointed stewards of the land about what is needed to restore environmental health.
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# Problems Caused by Lack of Fire

## Quality and quantity of water

- Tree canopy
    - 80% to 90%; should be 40%
    - 20% of the rainfall never hits the ground; is evaporated
    - At lower elevations, brush sucks up the water
    - Restoring water quantity would be helpful both to indigenous peoples trying to preserve their traditions and farmers
  - Water contaminants
    - King's River: No gathering below Sanger
    - Leaking septic tanks, sewage, washing machines, dishwashers, and other chemicals are sucked up by plants.
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# Quality and quantity of cultural resources


- Basket-weaving materials

- Not enough; no new chaparral, no new redbud
- Processed through the mouth; elders lose teeth, get sores
- Fungus that would be cleansed by fire is killing bushes

- Acorns

- Mistletoe, which is inhibited by fire, is killing oak trees
- Duff and acorn caps lay on the ground, leak out tannins, which go into the soil and hurt the trees



- Fish

- Fish need water
  - Used to be able to catch trout on Feingold Creek in Madera all summer long; now those creeks are dry in the summer
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# Quality and quantity of cultural resources

## ■ Other Resources

- My 36 acres has not burned in 100 years. This property contains thousands of cultural resources: milkweed, which was used for strings and cordage, redbud, sourberry sticks, sedge root, bracken fern, wild roses, which were used for arrows, bull pine, acorns from water oak, white oak, valley oak, California blue oak, and the interior live oak, chapparal, Manzanita, which pehabe we made a drink from the berries, wild potatoes, soap root, brodea, wild tobacco for different medicines, deer grass, and all kinds of flower seeds, like chia, tarweed, and snowdrops. Making a basket fine enough to hold those seeds.
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# What is the cure?

- Educate our friends in the USDA Environmental Defense Department and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. They are supposed to know about cultural materials, but they also don't know a thing about it.
  - Implement controlled burns under the watchful eye of elders and traditional cultural practitioners
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